Choral Harmony, No. 168.]

THE QUAVER,

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And Exponent of the Letter-note Method.

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June 1st, 1878.

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BRITISH MUSEUM

The Melo-piano.

UNDER this name Messrs. Kirkman and Son have produced an instrument which seeks to solve, and goes very far indeed towards solving, the vexed problem of sustained tone from the pianoforte. Everyone knows that when the string of an ordinary piano is struck by the hammer the greatest intensity of sound is produced at the moment of impact, and that afterwards it becomes less in proportion to the lessened vibration. Given a power able to continue the vibration at its original force—a power represented by the action of the bow upon the strings of a violin—and it follows that the tone will be continued in its original volume. This has long been recognised as a desideratum, and inventive minds have elaborated many a plan to secure it. But no success has hitherto attended their efforts; nor perhaps, have artistic musicians, as distinct from the mechanical and scientific members of that ilk, cared much to help them. The pianoforte, as we now have it, is an instrument with distinct characteristics, the very weakness of which has a charm of its own, and there are few, we imagine, who desire to see those characteristics removed in order that it may be supplied with others approximating to those of the "bowed" family. But, happily, the melo-piano of Messrs. Kirkman remains a piano *pur et simple*, the contrivance for sustaining the sound being an addition usable or not at will. This deserves special notice, inasmuch as it removes a forcible objection which promptly occurs to the mind of those who are jealous for the integrity of the instrument in its original form. The melo-piano can be, to whomsoever wishes it, a "piano" without the "melo," but it can be a great deal more on occasion. It is provided with a third pedal, which, when worked by the foot like the treadle of a spinning machine, gives a quick vibratory motion to a cylinder. This, in turn, brings a hammer to bear upon any string the key to which is pressed down, the hammer falling, as long as the pressure is sustained, with a rapidity equal, of course, to the vibrations of the cylinder working it. Nothing could be more simple. While the hammer beats upon the string the sound continues in unabated volume, and the instrument gives out its long-drawn notes in the fashion of the harmonium organ It will at once be observed that the action of the hammer, by renewing at each beat the intensity of the sound, must secure a *vibrato* effect, and this is, no doubt, the case. But the *vibrato*, being rapid in the extreme, will find almost universal favour as one of the special and most delicate charms of the instrument—just that, in point of fact, which violinists take care to secure by means equally mechanical. This, however, is not all. An appliance moved by the knee of the performer gradually lengthens or shortens the space through which the hammer falls, and proportionately increases or diminishes the tone produced. A perfect *crescendo* or *diminuendo* is thus obtained, and subjected with the greatest ease to the will of the executant. As to the quality of the tone produced, there can hardly be two opinions. Resembling somewhat that of "bowed" instruments, it yet has a *timbre* of its own; is very sympathetic; and, by being made so readily controllable, is productive of most charming effects. As the melo-piano can be used without reference to the new appliance, so the new appliance can be used without reference to the piano proper, a small lever near the left hand of the performer disconnecting the action of the latter at will. But both can be used together, and then the effect of the instrument is surprisingly grand, the vibration caused by the quick, firm blow of the ordinary hammer being kept up to its original intensity by the rapid action of that connected with the cylinder. That the invention represents a distinct gain nobody can doubt. It endows the "household instrument" with a new power without changing its character, opens up a new region of effects, and adds materially to its charm. This must have been the unanimous opinion of the amateurs and professors who listened to an able performance of suitable music by Signor Corani at Messrs. Kirkman and Sons' rooms in Soho-square. *Daily Telegraph.*

The Vocal Organs in Health and Disease.—*(Continued from page 151.)*

By Llewelyn Thomas, M.D.

WE now come to the resounding cavities which influence the tone, quality, or timbre, or, as the Germans call it, sound-colour of the voice. These cavities also exercise an influence on pitch, which is supplemental to that produced by the number of vibrations of the cords; but no alteration in pitch can take place without the action of the reeds or cords, as is observed in whispering, when the air passes through the larynx without moving the vocal bands. [Plate of Pharynx shown.] The cavity at the back of the mouth behind the soft palate is funnel shaped, with its base directed upwards and bounded by the skull. It is capable of great alterations by means of powerful muscles, and has opening into it seven

important channels: the gullet, the larynx, the mouth, the two posterior nostrils, and the two tubes leading from the throat to the ears. On looking into the mouth, we see the hard palate, immovable, and the soft palate, with a sort of appendix hanging from its centre, the uvula [Plate]. The soft palate is a freely movable contractile curtain suspended between the mouth and the pharynx, it serves to shut off food in swallowing from the posterior nostrils, and plays an important part in the production of tone and probably pitch. On each side of the soft palate run downwards two powerful muscles, containing between them the tonsils. These muscles are called the pillars of the palate, and they take an active part in tone and pitch production, by altering the size of the pharynx, and making its walls more or less tense.

The tonsils assist, with the other numerous buccal glands, in lubricating the mouth and pharynx, probably chiefly during the passage of food. Their functions, however, do not appear to be as important as their size and position would lead us to anticipate, yet their liability to morbid influences is far greater than that of other glands, obviously possessing greater functional activity, as, for example, the lachrymal or tear gland, which is very rarely attacked by disease.

The nasal cavities are divided by a partition into two parts, each of which contains three separate channels, which open in front and behind by a common orifice. These nasal cavities also communicate with several bony cavities in the skull containing air, so that they are most important resounding agents. Vowel sounds are produced in the pharynx; if the voice is made to resound here too much the tone is called gutteral. In the mouth cavity the consonants are formed; if the soft palate descends and allows the sound to resound too much in the nose cavities, the sound becomes nasal in tone; it also becomes nasal if the exit of the air from the nostrils is interfered with by polypuses or swollen mucous membrane. In speaking of the pharynx, I must direct your attention to the gullet, which is really a continuation of the pharynx. It is the tube which conveys food to the stomach. It lies behind the windpipe, and, unlike it, its walls are collapsed. It is very easy to pass a tube down it into the stomach, by which food can be introduced, or poison withdrawn. I have explained to you the action of the epiglottis in shutting off the windpipe; yet, incredible to say, the stomach pump tube has been introduced by certain ingenious persons into the windpipe, and the lungs carefully filled with beef tea, or, in poisoning cases, with chalk and water. This is not good for the patient. You will now see that the sword swallowing trick is not so very wonderful after all, as I am frequently called upon to pass this tube down patient's gullets, where food cannot pass. I will now describe the lining membrane of all these cavities, and this mucous membrane is most important, as on its various states of thickening and congestion depend nearly all our voice troubles in this treacherous climate. The mucous membrane is continuous with the external skin, but very different in appearance and in its proneness to disease; it is soft and velvety and full of blood vessels, as can be easily seen in the blood-shot eye or relaxed throat. This membrane lines the whole of the breathing tract and also the gullet, the stomach, the nasal cavities, and from there runs along the tear ducts to cover the eyeballs; it also lines the tubes going from the throat to the ear. You can thus understand the effects of a cold in the head, as all this large tract of membrane is continuous. It secretes the mucus which renders supple all these various parts, but its surface varies in different localities. Thus, in the nose and windpipe, it is covered with minute hair-like processes, which are constantly in motion, and tend to arrest the passage of dust into the lungs.

The connection between the mucous membrane of the stomach and tongue explains the various appearances of that organ so interesting to dyspeptics. Mucous membranes are very liable to the formation of tumours, as polypuses, and warty growths which are peculiarly noxious to the singing voice.

I must *en passant* direct your attention to muscular action generally in connection with voice production. The muscles are the agents in the body by which all movements are carried on, and they act by their inherent power of contracting in their length. The action of some may be called automatic, as the heart, which is constantly beating independent of the will; some are partly automatic as the muscles of respiration, which act without our being aware of it, unless our attention is directed to the subject. Indeed all muscles are in this sense partly automatic. Other muscular actions take place in obedience to a direct impulse from the brain and spinal cord proceeding along the various nerves. Most muscles act in groups, which antagonize each other. Great muscular efforts may take place without our fortunately being aware of the effort, as, for instance, in assuming and maintaining the erect position. In speaking and singing we bring into play certain groups of muscles possessing naturally, in a high degree, wonderful degrees of delicacy and precision of

action. In pianoforte playing, however, this precision and harmony is almost entirely acquired. It is the want of precision and harmony of action between the opposing groups of the vocal muscles that produces fatigue, quavering, and ultimately disease. The minute precision with which muscular contractions can be adapted to a designed effect, is in no instance more remarkable than in the muscles moving the vocal cords, as the musical pitch of the human voice is almost entirely regulated by the degree of tension of the vocal cords, which, though so short, are possessed of a very considerable degree of elasticity.

According to the observations of Muller, the average length of the cords in the male in a state of repose is about seven-tenths of an inch, while in the state of greatest tension it is about nine-tenths, the difference therefore being one-fifth of an inch. In the female, the dimensions are five-tenths and six-tenths respectively; the difference being thus only about one-eighth of an inch. Now the natural compass of the voice in most persons who have cultivated the vocal organ may be stated at about two octaves or twenty-four semitones. Within each semitone, a singer of ordinary capability could produce at least ten intervals; so that two hundred and forty intervals would be a moderate estimate for a moderate voice. There must, therefore, be at least two hundred and forty different states of tension of the vocal cords, every one of which is producible by the will, and the whole variation in the length of the cords being not more one fifth of an inch, the variation required to pass from one interval to another will not be more than 1200th of an inch. I will now quote from Dr. Carpenter's *Physiology* an instance, which I can hardly understand myself as I cannot conceive how the intervals, if made, were appreciated. It is said that the celebrated Mdme. Mara was able to sound a hundred different intervals between each tone. The compass of her voice was at least three octaves, or twenty-one tones, and the total number of intervals therefore two thousand, one hundred, all comprised within a variation of one eighth of an inch: so that it might be said that she was able to determine the contractions of her vocal muscles to nearly the seventeen thousandth of an inch. I feel somewhat doubtful on this poin', though I quote from so distinguished a physiological authority as Dr. Carpenter, I have accordingly consulted several musical authorities, but cannot glean a satisfactory opinion. I will, however, read you a letter received from Signor Garcia, whom I am glad to see here this evening. "Never having heard Mrs .Mara, I find it difficult to understand how she could with the voice divide the interval of a tone into two parts. A healthy organ well practised and guided by a fine ear, might doubtless adjust itself successively to a series of diapasons tuned to a hundredth part of a tone from eahc other; but the difficulty would be to perform the same feat without the aid of an instrument. A singer who should even limit his performance to twenty accurate divisions, must possess an exceptional control over his glottis, and above all have a marvellous ear. He would be a *rara avis*, and I should like to make his acquaintance."

The continuous sounds of consonants are formed by different degrees in the opening and contraction of the mouth and oral canal; others are sudden and momentary, and cannot be sustained, and are called explosive sounds, such as *b*, *p*, *d*, and *g*. Hence they are difficult to pronounce well in singing. And this is why the Italian language, in which they are seldom heard, is so much better adapted to songs than English or German. Stammering results from a want of the power of combination between the laryngeal and oral parts of the organ of speech, some letters, especially the explosive ones, *t* and *p*, not being consonant with the vowel, but requiring harmonious action between quite distinct groups of muscles. Somewhat analogous is the difficulty experienced by all the most practical vocalists in distinctly articulating during the production of high notes. This is because a great demand is made upon the soft palate muscles, simultaneously, both in vocalization and articulation. A voice properly trained should be able to pronounce every word in every part of the register, and nothing but the most constant practice can produce this necessary precision of well trained muscular obedience. Inarticulate voice or cries are produced by a kind of vocal explosion at the glottis; they are capable however of being arranged in a musical scale. Thus a concert of animals has been organized by exciting their cries according to the demands of the melody. It is related that a concert was given at Brussels, in 1549, by a musician disguised as a bear, who had a series of levers which pressed the tails of a number of cats of different sizes and ages. The cries were so diverse that it is stated, the clever musician had brought them into accord with each other. A troupe of four dogs has been exhibited also at Paris, who were made to bark the song of Rigoletto and a German waltz.

[*To be continued.*

The next series of musical lectures at Gresham College, by Dr. Wylde, will be given on June 11th, 12th, 13th, and 14th, commencing each evening at six o'clock.

The Microphone.

SCIENCE has lately given the world three new separate inventions so marvellous, delicate, and prospectively so useful to mankind that it is hard to say which can be called the greatest prize of discovery. Indeed, they belong more or less to each other, and are mutually supplemental, like the famous fairy-gifts in the story of PERI-BANOU. That Arab tale relates how three Princes who laid claim to the hand of one and the same Princess were sent abroad by the Sultan her father to decide their rivalry by seeing who could bring back the most wonderful article. Each was favoured by a special protection; and thus one obtained a magic pomegranite which would cure all diseases; another an ivory tube which would enable the most distant objects and scenes to be brought close to sight; and the third a magic carpet, by sitting on which you might be transported anywhere at will. The Princes met at a rendezvous far away from their home, and exhibited these treasures with mutual emulation, each declaring he felt sure of the fair reward, when it occurred to them to test the ivory tube at once, and see by it what the lovely Princess was doing. To the grief of all three suiters, she was plainly observed lying upon a bed of sickness, with the Court in tears and despair around. Thereupon the magic carpet was brought into immediate requisition, and, the lovers having flown through the air upon it, the instant and happy cure of her Royal Highness was effected by means of the enchanted pomegranite. If any one forgets how the knotty question of pre-eminence was finally settled between these three fairy gifts, each of which had proved so useful, we must leave him to turn back to this *Alf Lailat wa Laila*. Just as difficult, however, it would be now to decide whether the palm of merit should be awarded to the Telephone, the Phonograph, or the Microphone, the three latest and most extraordinary gifts of science to our time. All three inventions are closely affiliated in the order and method of their discovery. The telephone, which "wafts a sigh from Indus to the Pole," is by this time sufficiently understood, though by no means yet valued as it will be when the ingenious minds to which we owe it have had time to perfect their apparatus. The phonograph, which actually records speech and sound in a portable and reproducible form—outdoing the utmost marvels of the Arabian story—was discovered by Mr. EDISON, it is said, while trifling with his telephone. The little needle on the diaphragm pricked his finger, and, as he drew it away, made an interrupted line of blood upon its surface by the vibration of the point, whereupon he at once placed some MORSE paper so that the diaphragm could travel over it, and, speaking through the tube, found small but familiar "dots and dashes" inscribed. Reversing the process, and so managing the impressed paper as to make the diaphragm vibrate, it repeated to him faintly the "Holloa" which he had shouted at the machine. We might fairly say that this was the voice of Science herself rewarding a great inventor with one of the most magical of her hidden secrets, for Mr. EDISON went to work forthwith, and, neither eating, drinking, nor sleeping for two days and nights, toiled until he had produced and brought into working order the first phonograph.

The microphone—last of these amazing discoveries in that subtle region where electricity, magnetism, motion, and sound execute their invisible interchanges—has sprung forth to startle and benefit the world in much the same curious way. A paper lately read before the Royal Society announces the invention by Professor HUGHES of this astonishing instrument or apparatus which opens to our ears a universe of sounds hitherto inaudible—just as the microscope revealed a world of minute life and structure unknown before. Like Mr. EDISON, Professor HUGHES was one day employing the telephone for various acoustic experiments. He wished to investigate the effect of sonorous vibrations upon the electrical behaviour of conductors, led to this idea by the way in which selenium is known to become electrically effected by light, and also by the researches of Sir WILLIAM THOMSON upon the electrical conduct of strained wires. The Professor had a stretched wire on his telephonic circuit, and, though he talked and plucked at it, no effect followed until it broke. At that moment the telephone uttered a sort of "shh," which was very curious. He placed the broken ends together under a weight, and obtained again faint sounds, which were improved when the wires were connected by iron nails, or a steel chain—the more pieces and more diverse in substance from the conductor seemingly the better. Experimenting still further with his broken circuit, especially in the direction of this whisper from Science about "More pieces," he found metallic powder or fine metal filings wonderfully augment the power of transmitting sounds; while shot in a bright condition, platinum, carbon, and mercury also gave good results, particularly the last. Following up this clue, Professor HUGHES hit upon a plan of suspending finely

lividedmercury in a stick of charcoal by heating the latter and plunging it into quicksilver, whereupon the charcoal becomes infiltrated with the mercury in minutest but continuous particles. Inserting a "transmitter" of this sort in his circuit, an absolutely amazing sensitiveness to sound, as well as power of conveying it with the utmost fidelity, was displayed by the apparatus. A touch of the finger on the vibrating plate was conducted to the speaking end in volume of vibration like the rustle of a forest; the stroking of a camel's hair brush on a card was magnified into the sound of a loud whisper; the beating of a pulse, or the tick of a watch, was found to pass with perfect clearness through a resistance representing a hundred miles of space; and, when a fly happened to walk over the plate, the tramp of its feet was most distinctly caught like that of some six-legged horse trotting, and it was, moreover, heard to trumpet from its raised proboscis like an elephant in an Indian jungle. Sounds, in fact, totally inaudible before to human ears were arrested and reported by this simple and accidental experiment of interrupting the electrical circuit with a finely-divided conducting material. There is almost no doubt that the perfected Microphone will convey to us that hidden ripple of the sap rising in growing trees and plants which HUMBOLDT said might be a continuous melody in the auditory organs of earth's smallest creatures. The "music of the spheres"—if we could only find a way of localizing the vibrations of a star, as we can isolate and examine its light with the spectroscope—would possibly become sensible to us; and LORENZO, had he known of this magical invention, need not have told JESSICA that he should never catch a note of that cosmic anthem which each golden orb "in his motion like an angel sings, Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubins." To "hear the grass grow" has become, by this exquisitely delicate discovery, no longer an utterly inconceivable exercise for sharp ears. It may be expected to replace the clumsy methods of the stethoscope and sphymograph with a most accurate appliance, which will tell the doctor's ear exactly what the heart and the pulse have to say about his patient's case. Some application of it, by properly employing a little portable battery and circuit, may probably be hit upon, which will greatly alleviate, or even wholly remove, the disabilities of the deaf. But, more than this, while magnifying audible sound, and reporting to us tones which were before inaudible, this new invention is said to solve all difficulties as to articulateness in telephonic transmission. It conveys speech, or music, or the slightest inflections of accent and *timbre*, with perfect distinctness, and with a power so complete that it increases indefinitely that which the telephone has exhibited with a homogeneous conducting wire. In introducing his admirable discovery very modestly at the Royal Society, the inventor remarked, "It is impossible to say what may be the applications or effects of that which I have had the honour of bringing before you;" and to his great honour Professor HUGHES added, "I do not intend to take out a patent, as the facts I have mentioned belong more to the domain of discovery than of invention. No doubt inventors will ere long improve on the form and materials I have employed. I have already my reward in the distinction of submitting my researches to the Royal Society." This is, indeed, a spirit worthy of such great services to human knowledge, and Professor HUGHES has enhanced the fame of his invention by the unselfish manner in which he gives the world the full benefit of the discovery.

[*Daily Telegraph.*

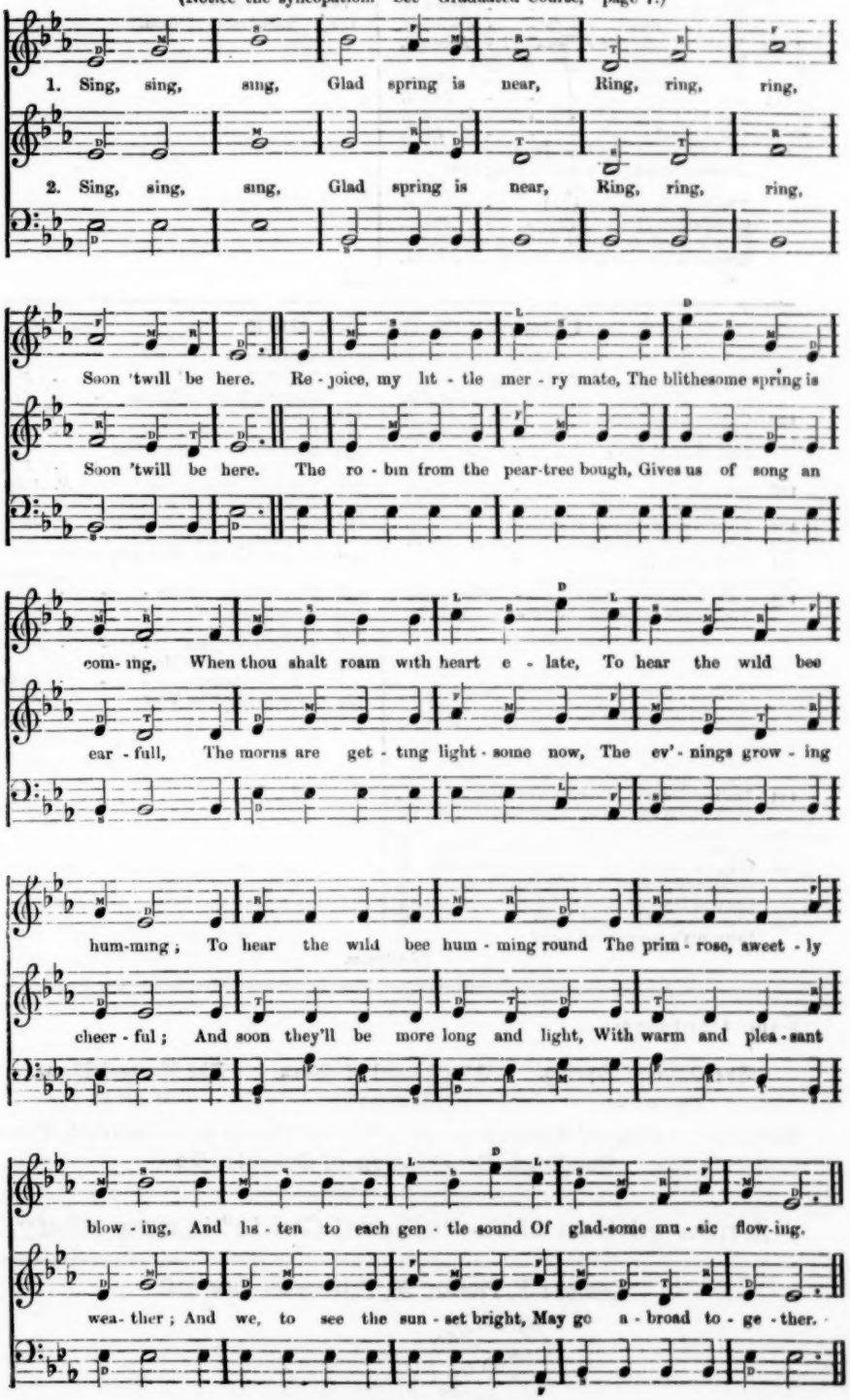
THE North London Choral Association gave a performance of *The Messiah*, on Tuesday, April 16th, at Finsbury Chapel.

Bach's *Magnificat* was performed for the first time by the Bach Choir, at St. James's Hall, on Monday, April 22nd.

A new oratorio, written by the Musical Professor of Harrow school, Mr. John Farmer, and entitled "Christ and His Soldiers," was performed at Exeter Hall, on Saturday afternoon, May 25th, in aid of the Convalescent Home attached to the King's College Hospital. Mr. Farmer's work, which is simple in character—having been composed mainly to interest, and be within the comprehension of children—was performed recently at Harrow under favourable circumstances, and with unqualified success. The solo vocalists at the London performance were—Miss Robertson, Miss Annie Butterworth, Mr. Arthur Hooper and Herr Henschel. The band, and chorus—which was under the direction of the composer—numbered over four hundred performers.

The phonograph now forms an interesting addition to the principal attractions of the Crystal Palace.

Sir Michael Costa's oratorio, "Eli," has been performed for the first time in Ireland by the Philharmonic Society at Belfast. The solo singers were Miss A. Sinclair, soprano; Miss M. Cummings, contralto (pupil of Madame Sainton-Dolby); Mr. Guy, tenor; and Mr. Cecil Tovey, bass; Mr. R. Stewart (the Dublin University Professor of Music), conductor.

No. 52. (*Met.* 120 = ♩) Words altered from BERNARD BARTON.
(Notice the syncopation. See "Graduated Course," page 7.)

1. Sing, sing, sing, Glad spring is near, Ring, ring, ring,
2. Sing, sing, sing, Glad spring is near, Ring, ring, ring,
Soon 'twill be here. Re - joice, my lit - tle mer - ry mate, The blithesome spring is
Soon 'twill be here. The ro - bin from the pear-tree bough, Gives us of song an
com- ing, When thou shalt roam with heart e - late, To hear the wild bee
ear - full, The morns are get - ting light - some now, The ev'- nings grow - ing
hum-ming; To hear the wild bee hum - ming round The prim - rose, sweet - ly
cheer - ful; And soon they'll be more long and light, With warm and plea - sant
blow - ing, And lis - ten to each gen - tle sound Of glad-some mu - sic flow-ing.
wea- ther; And we, to see the sun - set bright, May go a - broad to - ge - ther.

VOLUME III.—*(continued)*.

For Men's Voices.

111 Roll on, majestic ocean - - *Root.*
The Skylark - - - - *Matthaei.*
The Fatherland - - - *Reichardt.*
112 While all is hush'd *(Boat Glee)* - *Kreutzer.*
The morn unbars the gates of Light *(Hunting Glee)* - - - *Davy.*
113 Our Country - - - - *Shield.*
Our Flag - - - - - *Bradbury.*
Our Defenders - - - - *Hook.*
114 The heaving of the Lead (3 *v*). - *Shield.*
Awake the song of merry greeting (3 *v*). *Swiss.*
The time for Singing (3 *v*). - *German.*
Childhood's Home (3 *v*). - - *Pelton.*
Firmly stand, my native Land (3 *v*.) *Nageli.*
Empire of the Brave and Free (3 *v*.) *Danish.*

115 to 122 } The Junior Course on the Letter-note Method.

In progress.

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All the Numbers have an Accompaniment.

126 Hark the glad sound, the Saviour comes *Colville.*
127 Christmas has come - - - *Nageli.*
Christmas Tide - - - *Bradbury.*
Christmas Enigma - - -
Christmas Time is coming - *Thompson.*
128 Nativity - - - - - *Leach.*
Hail Christmas Tide - *Dr. Lloyd Fowle.*
129 Blessed are the poor in spirit - *Naumann.*
130 God be merciful unto us *R. A. Smith.*
131 Deus Misereatur - - - „
132 to 134 Psalmody Selections
135 Hail, thou New Year - - *Norwegian.*
The Year's last hour - - *Schultz.*
151 The God of Israel - - - *Rossini.*
German Evening Hymn - - *Lorenz.*
152 I will cry unto God - - *Zingarelli.*
153 Sound the loud timbrel - - *Avison.*
154 Bless the Lord, O my soul *(Kyrie from 10th Service)*. - *Mozart.*
155 Evening Hymn at Sea - - *R. A Smith.*
O Thou whose tender mercy hears *Douland.*
156 Glory to God in the highest - *Heilwig.*
Heavenly Dwelling - - - *Nageli.*
157 Hark! what mean those holy voices *Naumann.*
158 Blessed is the people - - *Righini.*
159 Christmas Carol - - *Lawrence.*
160 Land of Light - - - *Kreutzer.*
The richest Land - - - *German.*
161 Lovely seems the Moon's fair lustre - - - - *Callcott.*
162 Song of the New Year - - *Donizetti.*

"Harvest Home." *Dr. Lloyd Fowle.*

143 **Festival March.** Processional Song
Harvest Hymn. Single and double Chants
144 Thanksgiving Te Deum
145 O Lord, how manifold *(Harvest Anthem)*.
146 Harvest Hymn. Village Harvest March
Grace before meat. Grace after meat
General Harvest Hymn of Praise
147 The Harvest Home of Earth
Britannia's power shall stand

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